United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council unanimously authorizes use of "all necessary means" to secure delivery of humanitarian aid to Somalia and welcomes the offer by a Member State concerning the establishment of an operation to create such a secure environment; calls on all Member States, in a position to do so, to provide military forces and to make additional contributions to such an operation.

+ Security Council President expresses "deep concern and outrage" at increasing attacks against United Nations personnel in peace-keeping operations; six United Nations officials, kidnapped in Cambodia, not yet released.

+ Despite bombing of six trucks in Iraq last weekend, World Food Programme pledges to proceed with commitment to feed 1.2 million people in all parts of country.

+ Security Council arms embargo on former Yugoslavia must apply to all Republics that are part of it, says Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

+ President F.W. de Klerk submits timetable to Security Council on transitional process in South Africa, which envisages fully representative government of national unity in place no later than first half of 1994.

+ Consultations with Western Sahara chieftains to have taken place this week at Palais des Nations at Geneva, cancelled due to disagreements over the powers of some of participants.

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The Security Council this evening authorized the Secretary-General and Member States cooperating to "use all necessary means" to establish as soon as possible a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia

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and welcomed the offer by a Member State concerning the establishment of an operation to create such a secure environment. The Council took that action in recognition of the "unique character" of the present situation in Somalia.

Adopting unanimously resolution 794 (1992) and acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the Council also called on all Member States, which are in a position to do so, to provide military forces and to make additional contributions to such an operation. It asked the Secretary-General to establish a fund through which the contributions could be channeled to the States or operations.

Authorizing the Secretary-General and Member States to make the necessary arrangements for "unified command and control" of the forces involved, the Council also asked that appropriate mechanisms be established for coordination between the United Nations and the forces involved. It also decided to appoint an ad hoc commission composed of Council members to report to the Security Council, and invited the Secretary-General to attach a small group of United Nations liaison staff to the field headquarters of the unified command.

Under the resolution, the Council asked the Secretary-General to report to it on a regular basis, the first such report to be made no later than 15 days after today, on the attainment of the objective of the resolution in order to enable the Council to make the necessary decision for a prompt transition to continued peace-keeping operations. It also asked the Secretary-General to submit a plan to the Council to ensure that the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) will be able to fulfil its mandate upon withdrawal of the unified command.

The Council demanded that all parties, movements and factions in Somalia take all measures necessary to facilitate the efforts of the United Nations and its humanitarian organizations to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to the affected population in that country and that it ensure the safety of United Nation personnel, including the authorized military forces.

Speaking after the vote, the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, Edward J. Perkins, pointed out that while the resolution authorized the use of "all necessary means", the Council's mission was essentially a peaceful one, and that its members would endorse the use of force only "if and when we decide it is necessary to accomplish our objective".

He went on to say that in offering to contribute to the effort authorized by the resolution, the United States' only objective was to provide unambiguous support for the United Nations in enabling it to confront challenges to international peace and security. Once deployed, the military forces would remain in Somalia no longer than necessary, he indicated, noting that it was important, in the case of Somalia and in future cases, to send an unambiguous message that "the international community has the intent, and will, to act decisively regarding peacekeeping problems that threaten international stability".

Speaking in favour of the resolution, the other speakers - including the permanent members of the Council - underlined the unique nature of the crisis in Somalia and the urgent need to use exceptional measures to bring humanitarian relief to this country's starving populations.

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Security Council President Chinmaya Rajaninath Gharekhan (India) has expressed "deep concern and outrage" on behalf of Council members at the increasing number of attacks against United Nations personnel serving in various peace-keeping operations. The statement comes in reaction to a number of serious incidents during the last few days affecting military and civilian personnel serving with United Nations operations in Angola, Cambodia and former Yugoslavia.

Condemning those attacks, the Council President demanded that all parties concerned take all necessary measures to prevent their recurrence. He said the Council considered the abduction and detention of United Nations peace-keeping personnel as totally unacceptable and demanded the immediate and unconditional release of the personnel serving with United Nations operations in Cambodia and Yugoslavia.

On 29 November in Uige, in northern Angola, a Brazilian police observer with the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) was killed as a result of an outbreak of hostilities between National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and government forces, during which the UNAVEM camp was caught in the cross-fire.

The statement went on to say that the situation of the United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR), which had already suffered over 300 casualties, 20 of them fatal, remained deeply troubling. On 30 November, two Spanish UNPROFOR soldiers in Bosnia and Herzegovina were seriously injured in a mine attack, and a Danish soldier was abducted by armed men yesterday. However, the latter was released a few hours later.

On 1 December, two British military observers serving in the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) and four naval observers, two from the Philippines, one from New Zealand and one from the United Kingdom, on patrol in Kompong Thom province, were illegally detained by forces belonging to the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea (NADK). An United Nations helicopter, sent to assist in the discussions for their release, was fired upon, and a French military observer on board was injured. Moreover, six United Nations civilian police monitors -- three Indonesians, two Tunisians and one Nepalese -- were injured in two land-mine incidents in Siem Reap province.

With regard to the safety of the six kidnapped United Nations officers in Cambodia, a United Nations spokesman said today they had not yet been released but that he was very hopeful that that would happen shortly.

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Despite the bombing of six of its trucks in Iraq this past weekend, the World Food Programme (WFP) has pledged to proceed with its winter relief operations in all parts of the country. However, the United Nations will tighten security measures for future convoys carrying out the Programme's commitment to feed 1.2 million people all over the country throughout the winter.

The time bombs exploded under the WFP trucks on Sunday evening, as they were parked outside warehouses in Erbil, in northern Iraq. No one was hurt and the warehouses were not damaged, but the explosions destroyed 30 tonnes of flour. United Nations guards found a time bomb planted under a seventh vehicle and diffused it without incident.

The trucks were part of a 24-vehicle convoy travelling from Turkey to Iraq. They had been chartered by the United States Government to carry 90 tonnes of wheat flour on consignment to WFP. Another convoy of 24 trucks, carrying wheat seeds and wheat flour, arrived safely at Suleimaniya and Erbil.

In late October, when the United Nations and the Government of Iraq agreed to extend their Memorandum of Understanding to cover humanitarian relief operations until the end of March 1993, WFP had pledged to provide and deliver 49,000 tonnes of emergency rations by truck from neighbouring Turkey and Jordan, for delivery throughout the country.

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The Security Council arms embargo on the former Yugoslavia applied to all the Republics that were part of it, the Chargé d'affaires of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) says in a letter of 1 December to the President of the Council.

Protesting a letter from the Permanent Representative of Croatia interpreting the sanctions as applying exclusively to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, he states that the measures apply to vessels going to or coming from all the Adriatic ports of the former Yugoslavia, including those of Croatia. That had also been confirmed, he says, by the Ministers of the Western European Union at their meeting in Rome on 20 November.

He writes that while not wishing to reply at this time to allegations about the Serbian authorities' involvement in the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina, he quotes the Security Council's demand that "all forces, in particular elements of the Croatian army, be withdrawn, or be subjected to the authority of the Government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, or be disbanded or disarmed".
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President F.W. de Klerk has submitted a timetable to the Security Council on the transitional process in South Africa, which envisages that a fully representative government of national unity will be in place no later than the first half of 1994.

In a statement transmitted to the Secretary-General, President de Klerk emphasized that the proposed timetable could be implemented only with the cooperation of all important parties in South Africa. The Government had hoped that the process it launched in 1990 would lead the country away from violent political conflict towards a just society with normalized free party competition and participation. However, he said, "violence delays progress along the road to constitutional reform". For elections to be free and fair, it was "inconceivable" that political parties should have private armies. Only recognized political parties should participate in the political process to ensure a climate conducive to free and fair elections, the statement said.

Meanwhile, the Committee established by the Security Council concerning the question of South Africa said in a statement yesterday that it had learned "with dismay" that the Defence Exhibition of South Africa (DEXSA-92) apparently attracted representatives of foreign Governments and organizations of the arms industry. Reminding United Nations Member States of the international embargo against arms, ammunition of all types and military vehicles produced in South Africa, the Committee urged Governments not to act in any manner inconsistent with the Security Council's resolutions.
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Consultations with Western Sahara chieftains scheduled originally to take place at the Palais des Nations at Geneva at the beginning of this week have been cancelled due to disagreements over the powers of some of those due to participate.

According to a press release issued at Headquarters, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Western Sahara, Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, was to invite 38 tribal chieftains from Western Sahara for consultations in Geneva on 30 November and 1 December. The participants -- 19 of them nominated by Morocco and 19 by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO) -- were expected to advise the Special Representative on ways and means of identifying those entitled to take part in the referendum the United Nations plans to organize in Western Sahara.

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